

**Amendments to the Claims:**

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listings, of claims in the application:

**Listing of Claims:**

Claim 1. (Currently Amended) A laser machining apparatus comprising a beam splitting means, a deflection means, a beam combining means and a machining lens, said beam splitting means splitting a laser beam into ~~a plurality of~~ three or more laser beam splits different in optical path, said beam combining means aligning said optical paths of said beam splits in essentially the same direction so that said beam splits are incident on said machining lens:

said beam combining means comprising a total reflection/transmission type beam combining means and a polarizing type beam combining means; and

wherein the optical paths of two of said beam splits are aligned in essentially the same direction by said total reflection/transmission type beam combining means, whereupon optical paths of said two beam splits and the other beam splits are aligned in essentially the same direction by said polarizing type beam combining means.

Claim 2. (Previously Presented) A laser machining apparatus according to Claim 1, wherein two of said beam splits are deflected by a two-dimensional deflection means individually, whereupon optical paths of said two beam splits are aligned in essentially the same direction by said total reflection/transmission type beam combining means, while an outgoing beam of said polarizing type beam combining means is deflected two-dimensionally.

Claim 3. (Previously Presented) A laser machining apparatus according to Claim 2, wherein a relay optical system is disposed between said two-dimensional deflection means disposed on the incoming side of said polarizing

type beam combining means and a two-dimensional deflection means disposed on the outgoing side thereof.